

Thanks a lot, you radicals

Free speech, or not free speech...that is the question. And it appears that the omniscient radicals at UMass have the answer. In occupying the UMass Career Center last Thursday and preventing a recruiter from the CIA from speaking at an information session, the radicals made it clear that their answer is "free speech to all, except when we don't like what someone is freely speaking about."

Nice. Beautiful. Perfect. Thanks,

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radicals.

The University of Massachusetts Career Center brings to campus organizations with career opportunities *as requested by the students of UMass*. No one has the right to interject his or her own morals upon any other individual if the outcome is going to be an infringement on that persons rights.

To all the people who braved the cold last Thursday night to hear the CIA recruiter speak at the Career Center, you can go to the Radical Student Union and thank them personally for not letting him in. To all the students who set up an interview for Friday with the CIA representatives and had to either cancel it, or go through the UMass police headquarters and be escorted to an "undisclosed area" for what should have been a free and open meeting, you can also thank the Radical Student Union.

"No free speech for fascists!" chant the radicals.

"Fascism kills," they scream, rationalizing why the CIA should have no first amendment rights. "Free speech is now institutionalized, and used against the people it was intended to protect," say the new guardians of the US Constitution.

What's going on here? Free speech isn't something debatable. It either is, or it isn't.

In the carefree, ideal world of the radical, people will never speak ill of other people. The most "dangerous" free speech in that world would be someone standing up and saying "I have curly hair."

In the chaotic, real world of reality, people do not all agree. In the United States, viewpoints are heard, people are criticized, comments are made openly, ideologies are attacked, and everyone has the right to speak. The only censorship which takes place are in a state of national emergency, or if someone is maliciously stating lies about someone else, in which case he is committing slander which is punishable by law.

In American society individuals are given the benefit of the doubt to be able to hear all sides of an issue and make up his or her mind as to where he or she will stand. Seven years ago a neo-Nazi organization was legally permitted to march and speak in Skokie, Illinois. A Jewish civil libertarian lawyer represented the neo-Nazis in the state supreme court defending their first amendment rights. The point is that if you start censoring one group, then who is next? The censoring of one organization could open up a crack in the dam of free speech that would be destined to grow.

I have no qualms with protests. Protesting is another form of free speech. I don't necessarily have to agree with the protesters' viewpoint, and I may even criticize them in a column, but I would never claim that they have no right doing what they do. When protests get in the way of other peoples personal business, or rights, than I have a qualm with the protest.

The Radical Student Union continually hypocritises(?) themselves to the point of discredibility. Imagine what would happen if a group of students went to one of the RSU's guest leftist speakers with air horns to prevent him from speaking. What if those students felt that there should be "no free speech for communists", and wore angel of death costumes with hammer and sickles on them? I don't think the RSU, or the rest of civilized society would like it too much.

Free speech cuts both ways.

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